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**Fight to save USS: vote YES for action**

The fight to save USS pensions continues apace. Wherever you work and whatever you do the current proposals to end guaranteed USS pensions [will drastically affect you and your family.](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/37267/151504/5213/1/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogNSBKYW51YXJ5IDIwMTg%3d&x=ba28b2b3)

The law says we need at least a 50% turnout in each workplace so if not enough members vote in your institution you will not be able to join any national action the rest of the union takes. Please vote now if you have yet to do so or [request a replacement ballot if you’ve lost it](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/37267/151504/5243/2/).

Please also email your MP [via the UCU website](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/37267/151504/5214/3/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogNSBKYW51YXJ5IDIwMTg%3d&x=401d69a1) and encourage them [to sign a parliamentary motion on USS](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/37267/151504/5215/4/), write to universities minister Jo Johnson on your behalf and to contact their local vice-chancellor.

**The unbelievable Toby Young appointment**

The government sneaked out the names of [members of the new Office for Students (OfS) board](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/37267/151504/5246/5/) over New Year. The one that drew the most criticism was Tory cheerleader Toby Young. [UCU general secretary Sally Hunt said](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/37267/151504/5247/6/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogNSBKYW51YXJ5IDIwMTg%3d&x=e1135406) if the OfS was to have had any credibility it needed a robust board looking out for students' interests. Not Toby Young dressed up as the voice of teachers.

It didn't take long for Young's offensive and juvenile tweets on an [extraordinary range of subjects](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/37267/151504/5248/7/) to be revealed. Women in particular were under attack in a [string of puerile and objectifying tweets](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/37267/151504/5249/8/). The man-child also insulted disabled people, working class people, gay people, teachers and even flirted with eugenics.

While the academic community [rejected his appointment](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/37267/151504/5250/9/), Labour called for [him to be sacked](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/37267/151504/5251/10/) and [petitions were set up to have him removed from the board](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/37267/151504/5252/11/), foreign secretary and former colleague Boris Johnson defended Young and his "[caustic wit](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/37267/151504/5253/12/)". The 54-year-old [Young described his comments as "sophomoric"](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/37267/151504/5254/13/). He made them in his 40s.

**Further education pay campaign**

UCU is campaigning for better pay and better jobs in FE. A large number of FE branches are building now towards an Industrial Action ballot. [You can read more about the campaign and watch our film here](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/37267/151504/5244/14/).

[Click here for the full update including:](https://list.mercury.ucu.org.uk/t/37267/151504/5245/15/?c73c8e04=Y2FtcGFpZ251cGRhdGU%3d&60bc612e=X2FsbC1tZW1iZXJz&560a3889=VGhlIEZyaWRheSBlbWFpbDogNSBKYW51YXJ5IDIwMTg%3d&x=2334d33d)

1. In the news
2. Health & safety case study - win for UCU member
3. Calling academic-related professional staff

Best wishes

Justine Stephens
UCU head of campaigns